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Part of Examiner's Amendment

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PATENT

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR COMPUTER-AIDED  
COMMUNICATIONS USING ELECTRONIC NETWORKS

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/175,470, entitled "SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR COMPUTER-AIDED COMMUNICATIONS USING ELECTRONIC NETWORKS," and FIELD OF THE INVENTION Filed on January 19, 2000.

The present invention relates to systems and methods for communicating across an electronic communication network. More particularly, the present invention relates to an intercom system which permits a user at one user node on the network to communicate with one or more users at other nodes on the network.

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BACKGROUND OF RELATED TECHNOLOGY

Communications within particular places, such as within office environments, more specifically dental offices, medical offices, or law offices, have traditionally occurred through the use of intercom or telephonic systems. Typically, such systems allow an individual to "beep" or otherwise alert another individual who is located in a different part of the office that the one individual wishes to speak to the other individual. The other individual can then respond and the individuals converse. Such systems may also include the ability for an individual to broadcast a message to an entire office such that the message is heard from all or less than all of the other intercom devices attached to the system, such as when one individual desires to page another individual who is not present at a known location.

20 Such inter-office communication systems typically require a hard-wiring of all the intercom devices present on the system in order to function. Alternatively, such devices

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